

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 3 and 7 currently appear in this application. The Office Action of June 27, 2008, has been carefully studied. These claims define novel and unobvious subject matter under Sections 102 and 103 of 35 USC, and therefore should be allowed. Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration, entry of the present amendment, and formal allowance of the claims.

Amendment

Claim 1 has been amended extensively to recite, "crushing in the soaked rice grains after draining the water from the soaked rice grains..." While there is no literal support for this amendment it is believed that the amendment is well supported by the specification as filed. For example Paragraph 0015 of the published application, US 2006/019833A1, recites, "raw rice grains are soaked in water for, usually, 1-24 hours, preferably 5-6 hours," and that "it is desirable that rice grains are allowed to absorb water by soaking in water and controlled to give a moisture content of, usually, 28% or higher, preferably 30-33% after soaking." From these passages it is apparent that the rice grains are soaked and drained just prior to the crushing step. The penetrating step of claim 1 has been amended based upon original claims 4 and 5, and the description at paragraph 0017 in the published application.

The drying step in claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 8

Claim 3 has been amended to depend solely from claim 2, and the term "roughly" has been deleted

Claims 4-6 and 8-20 have been cancelled

Rejections under 35 USC. 112,

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 USC. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention

This rejection is respectfully traversed As noted above, claim 1 has been amended so as better to define the subject matter It is believed that claim 1 as amended is now definite

Claim 3 has been amended to delete "roughly", and claim 3 has been amended to depend solely from claim 2 so that there is antecedent basis for "said unpolished rice grains and said polished rice grains" has antecedent basis in claim 2

Claim 6 has been cancelled, and the term "moisture content" has been amended to "a moisture content" in claim 1

Claims 10, 12, 15, 18 and 19 have been cancelled, so the rejection of these claims is now moot

Art Rejections

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 USC. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Morohashi et al, JP 2000-175636 in view of Nakamura et al, US 6045847

This rejection is respectfully traversed. Morohashi discloses a [process for producing rice flour by crushing rice grains after lowering their hardness by enzymatically decomposing pectin contained in the rice grains In Morohashi, the rice grains are soaked in an aqueous solution comprising organic acids in order to swell the pectin contained in the rice grains with the organic acids. When the pectin is swelled, it is easier for the enzyme pectinase to act on the pectin

Nakamura disclose a method for cooking rice comprising soaking washed rice in water, and cooking the washed rice in water containing water-soluble hemicellulose. According to Nakamura, this method of cooking rice produces rice of consistently good quality when cooked in a large amount in a short time. It should be noted that, in Nakamura's method, trehalose is disclosed to be one of many additives that can be used in combination with hemicellulose

In contrast to the processes disclosed in Morohashi and Nakamura, the process claimed herein comprises soaking rice grains in water, draining the rice grains and crushing the rice grains, adding α,α -trehalose or maltitol to the crushed rice grains, partially drying the rice grains containing α,α -trehalose

or maltitol, and milling the partially dried rice grains to produce a rice flour. Neither Morohashi nor Nakamura, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests such a process for producing rice flour. While Morohashi produces rice flour from rice grains that have been treated with at least one organic acid, Nakamura merely cooks rice to produce cooked rice rather than rice flour.


The Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to add trehalose as an additional additive because Nakamura teaches that it is known to use such an additive to rice during soaking. However, claim 1 does not include a soaking step in which trehalose is added to water for soaking rice. In claim 1 as amended, the α,α -trehalose or maltitol is sprayed in the form of an aqueous solution or is applied in powdery form by dredging the crushed rice grains through the saccharide. As such, it is respectfully submitted that the method claimed herein is not obvious over Morohashi in view of Nakamura et al.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted
that the claims are now in condition for allowance, and favorable
action thereon is earnestly solicited

Respectfully submitted,

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